

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 041554Z MAY 76
FM AMCONSUL STUTTGART
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3554
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USMISSION USBERLIN
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

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FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, GW
SUBJECT: BUBACK ASSASSINATION SUSPECT CAPTURED

REF: STUTTGART 729

SUMMARY: TERRORISTS GUENTER SONNENBERG AND VERENA BECKER
WOUNDED AND CAPTURED IN SHOOTOUT WITH POLICE IN SINGEN NEAR
CONSTANCE DURING MORNING MAY 3. SONNENBERG, A SUSPECT IN
CHIEF PROSECUTOR BUBACK ASSASSINATION, IN SERIOUS CONDITION.
BECKER, SENTENCED TO 6 YEARS IMPRISONMENT IN 1974, WAS ONE
OF PRISONERS THAT WERE EXCHANGED IN PETER LORENZ KIDNAPPING
IN BERLIN AND FLOWN TO ADEN. MACHINE GUN WHICH WAS FOUND
IN POSSESSION OF TERRORISTS IDENTIFIED AS THE ONE WHICH WAS
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USED IN BUBACK ASSASSINATION. MEANWHILE, CONVICTED
PRISONERS AT STAMMHEIM AND ELSEWHERE HAVE GIVEN UP
THEIR HUNGER STRIKE AFTER INDICATIONS FROM JUSTICE
MINISTRY THAT FIVE ADDITIONAL CONVICTED PRISONERS WOULD
BE TAKEN INTO STAMMHEIM AFFORDING GREATER OPPORTUNITY
FOR SOCIALIZING. END SUMMARY.

2. TERRORISTS GUENTER SONNENBERG AND VERENA BECKER CAPTURED IN SINGEN MORNING MAY 3 AFTER A SHOOTOUT WITH POLICE. SONNENBERG, A SUSPECT IN BUBACK ASSASSINATION, SHOT IN HEAD AND IN SERIOUS CONDITION IN CONSTANCE HOSPITAL. BECKER SHOT IN LEG. ONE POLICE OFFICER ALSO SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BUT OUT OF DANGER AND A SECOND POLICE OFFICER RECEIVED MINOR GUNSHOT INJURIES.

3. TERRORISTS RECOGNIZED BY CIVILIAN WHO OBSERVED THEM IN CAFE. POLICE CAME TO CHECK IDENTITY PAPERS, WHICH THE TERRORISTS CLAIMD WERE IN THEIR AUTOMOBILE. WHILE WALKING TO THE AUTO, A GUN BATTLE ENSUED ENABLING TERRORISTS TO ESCAPE FOR SHORT PRIOD. POLICE REINFORCEMENTS CORNERED AND CAPTURED TERRORISTS WITHIN MINUTES.

4. TERRORISTS HAD WITH THEM 1 SUB MACHINE GUN, 2 REVOLVERS, 3 PISTOLS, AND A KNIFE. FEDERAL CRIMINAL OFFICE ANNOUNCED DURING NIGHT OF MAY 3 THAT MACHINE GUN IS SAME ONE BY WHICH BUBACK WAS SHOT. SONNENBERG WAS HIT BY SAME MACHINE GUN. IN SHOOTOUT WITH POLICE, HE HAD LOST MACHIN GUN AND CONTINUED SHOOTING WITH OTHER WEAPONS. ONE POLICEMAN USED LOST MACHINE GUN TO FIRE AT AND HIT SONNENBERG.

5. VERENA BECKER HAD BEEN SENTENCED TO 6 YEARS IMPRISONMENT IN 1974 FOR PARTICIPATION IN SEVERAL TERRORIST ACTIONS. SHE WAS RELEASED WHEN BERLIN POLITICIAN PETER LORENZ WAS TAKEN HOSTAGE TO FREE TERRORISTS IN EXCHANGE FOR HIM. SHE WAS THEN FLOWN TO ADEN AND IS SUSPECTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEANWHILE TO HAVE TAKEN LEADING POSITION IN HARD-CORE TERRORIST GROUP. BECKER TAKEN TO STAMMHEIM PRISON.

6. POLICE SEARCHING FOR DRIVER OF STOLEN BMW WITH STUTTGART LICENCE NUMBER IN WHICH ANOTHER TERRORIST IS THOUGHT TO HAVE FLED. CAR WAS FOUND EMPTY AFTER HAVING BROKEN THROUGH POLICE BARRIER. THERE ARE TENTATIVE REPORTS OF ARREST IN THE MANNHEIM-HEIDELBERG AREA, BUT NOTHING IS DEFINITE YET.

7. CAPTURING OF TWO TERRORISTS CONFIRMS FORMER ASSUMPTION THAT TERRORISTS HAD CONCENTRATED THEIR ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHWEST GERMAN AREA.

8. IN OTHER TERRORIST DEVELOPMENTS, THE BAADER-MEINHOF PRISONERS IN STUTTGART AND ELSEWHERE HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR FOUR-WEEK HUNGR STRIKE ON APRIL 31 AFTER THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG JUSTICE MINISTRY PROMISED IMPROVE-

MENTS IN PRISON CONDITIONS. THIS MEANS THAT ABOUT FIVE MORE TERRORISTS WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO STAMMHEIM PRISON. WITH THEIR HUNGER STRIKE, BAADER, ENSSLIN, AND RASPE AS WELL AS IRMGARD MOELLER AND INGRID SCHUBERT WANTED TO COMPELL JUSTICE AUTHORITIES TO COMBINE AT ONE PRISON AT LEAST 15 PRISONERS TO "GROUPS THAT ARE ABLE TO ACT AMONG THEMSELVES" ("INTERAKTIONSFÄHIGE GRUPPEN"). THE BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG MINISTRY OF JUSTICE HAS CONFIRMED THAT THE PRISONER GROUP IN STAMMHEIM WOULD BE ENLARGED AND HAS ACCEPTED THE ADVICE OF A MEDICAL COMMITTEE WHICH ADVISED AGAINST FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO FORCE-FEED THE PRISONERS AGAINST THEIR WILL BECAUSE OF THE DANGER TO THEIR LIVES CONNECTED WITH SUCH PROCEDURE. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE OFFICIALS ADD THAT A CHANGE IN THE PRISON CONDITIONS JUSTIFIED SINCE ANNOUNCEMENT OF SENTENCE CONSIDERED A CHANGE IN THE OVERALL SITUATION.

9. FURTHER REGARDING PRISON CONDITIONS FOR THE CONVICTED
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PRISONERS IN STAMMHEIM, JUSTICE MINISTRY HAS POINTED OUT THAT EACH OF THEM HAS A TV SET, A RADIO AND RECORD-PLAYER WITH MANY RECORDS. ALTOGETHER, THEY HAVE ABOUT 2,000 BOOKS FROM WHICH TO CHOOSE; BAADER HAS SUBSCRIBED TO 16 NEWSPAPERS, ENSSLIN TO 21, RASPE TO 26, SCHUBERT TO 14, AND MOELLER TO 12. ALL DEFENDANTS ARE OFTEN VISITED BY THEIR DEFENSE ATTORNEYS AND OFTEN GET PRIVATE VISITS APPROVED BY THE JUDGES. IF THEY SO DESIRE, PRISONERS OF SAME SEX MAY STAY IN ONE ROOM OVERNIGHT. EVERY DAY, THE PRISONERS MAY MEET FOR ABOUT 4 HOURS.

COMMENT: AFTER SENTENCING OF 3 BAADER-MEINHOF PRISONERS IN STAMMHEIM AND CAPTURING OF THE TWO TERRORISTS, DANGER OF A "LIBERATION ATTEMPT" OF TERRORISTS HAS GROWN CONSIDERABLY. GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES OF SINGEN INCIDENT, POLICE APPARENTLY DID NOT HANDLE CAPTURE WITH GREATEST SKILL AND TOOK UNNECESSARY CHANCES. AT THIS STAGE IT IS DIFFICULT, HOWEVER, TO EXPLAIN POLICE/PUBLIC CONFUSION OVER IDENTITY OF CAPTURED TERRORISTS WHICH PERSISTED THROUGHOUT MOST OF MAY 3. (POLICE ORIGINALLY IDENTIFIED WOUNDED TERRORISTS AS KNUT FOLKERTS, ANOTHER SUSPECT IN BUBACK CASE, AND JULIANE PLAMBECK). CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, HOWEVER, MUST HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING TO SECURITY OFFICIALS SINCE IT GIVES THEIR EFFORTS THE NECESSARY ADDED DIMENSION AND AT THE SAME TIME COULD HAVE A DEMORALIZING EFFECT ON THE TERRORISTS THEMSELVES.

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